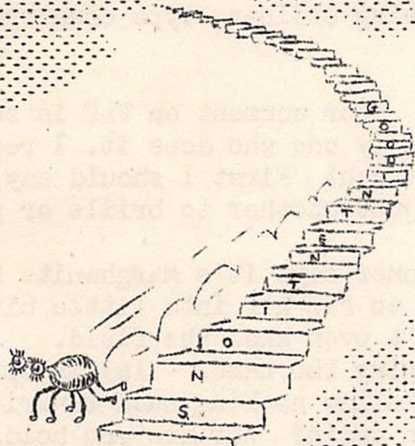


# THE LETTER FEA

SPRING  
1957

PUBLISHED BY:  
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7 Inchmery Road  
Catford S.E.6.  
For O.M.P.A.  
Mailing No.11.



Well, unless you're coming with me, you're going to have to wave goodbye because at the rate things are going I'm well on the way to Hell, and I understand paper burns at Fahrenheit 451 so it looks like that's the end of my fanning days ... or the beginning, depending on how you look at things.

TSI was all roughed out -- so was Bran Tub (except for you, Mr. Harris. From here on in I shall ignore you) & everything was ready to roll. Then the trouble started. An unprecedented rush at work left me weak and collapsed when I reached home at night. The paper and stencils we ordered got all mixed up, the right stuff being accidentally returned to the works by our landlord and the wrong stuff being delivered next door. Came the deadline. And whoof! Went the deadline. Such is life. Looks like you'll be having a lot of postmailings this time. Especially as we've got to recut the Constitution. It's a case of Constitution & no TSI etc ... and as my Constitution is already undermined you can't have TSI yet anyway. Don't be so eager... it'll come... it'll come.

Now to the mailing and my, but we've some interesting stuff. Real good some of it. Especially when, as in the case of SFFY, the authors have been really wonderful and sent us copies of the original magazines upon which the lampoons were based.

SCIENCE FICTION Shall I repeat Walt's pun, or does everyone know it? That FIVE YEARLY SFFY isn't really dead...it's only half-decayed. Not only is it isn't dead, but it's kicking nicely too. That Lee and Larry have the terrific ability of laughing at themselves has given them the opportunity to turn out a fanzine that is one continuous chuckle. There are the little figures turned out real Quandry-style with colours fading into each other (that reminds me of the ad in one of their prozines with all the Staff depicted as monsters) (all identifiable too). You know, if SFFY were printed and put on the newstands, I reckon it would sell as well as the original. If only 5 years went by quicker... no, no, what am I saying? 3 months goes far too fast these days, let's not have the years going quicker too.

YRAUTIBO. The grave opens and look what springs up! Not only does it come to life but it ups and marries too. There's not much one can say about Yrautibo but one can say a terrific amount about Sheila & Mal. All one needs to say though is, all the very best for a long & happy life together... and I shan't even mention a word about little printed fanzines or anything. Yrautibo sounds like a port-of-call for Mike Wilson. Hey, Sheila! One thing. How come Mal scooped ol' sexfiend Harris (whose name I'm not mentioning this time) on this? The wedding, I mean.

MORPH My first impression on looking at this cover was that it is the worst you have every done John,.. too bitty. There's a helluva lot in it of course but... I wish we could have seen the rest of the queer animal owning those hands - only 2 fingers on the two outside hands & 6 on the centre one! Interesting. And didn't Morphology lose something?

However, congratulations on the scoop of the Bonestell ad. Wizzo old chap, really. Strange how he's capable of painting ordinary-type countryside as well as weird foreign-planet type things.

Dear John. Or should that be Dear John? Your comment on TLF is so ambiguous I'm a little in doubt. You're not the only one who does it. I recall Vinç's comment on the last issue of Brantub (last hah! First I should say)... the sort of thing that leaves me in doubt as to just whether to bridle or purr.

Sarah Russell... I've no proof but John Brunner says it's Marghanita Laski and I've no reason to doubt him. I should like to rip her into little bits, she not only doesn't know what's good, she doesn't even know the field. Boardman... have apparently merged but still keeping the name. And in spite of your quotes, John, I still think the King in Yellow nothing much to write home about. How soon shall we see you in London again? Or are you holding off until the Worldcon? Vinç and I have fixed our holidays for the fortnight after the Con and so we hope to be able to see much more of both British & American fandom during that period.

VERITAS. Just what can one say about a zine like this? Impeccable finish, superlatively good illos, writing by the two most facile authors I've so far met, and old GATW himself. All I can say is that the Atom & Android cartoons were the funniest I've seen for a long time & that the Atom one still gives me hysterics every time I think of it. A wonderful start, both of you. Here's wishing lots more zines from you will be turned out through OMPA. P.S. What an I to do with all these threatening letters... apart from that?

SCOTTISHE This mailing should reach you in time for me to wish you all the best in your new job. Here's hoping we see you more often now. Apart from the slightly drunken appearance of this zine there just isn't anything for me to bitch about. Except why in hell was YUL (excuse me while I genuflect) Brynner left out of the likes column? What a stocking... only one addition. Bloch, Tucker, Grennell & Sturgeon in England for Worldcon 1957.

IMBROGLIO Impeccable, Mike, impeccable. Congrats to Ken on the cover. I enjoyed this. But I'm just daring Sandy....

BRITISH S.F. I was absolutely delighted to get this in my OMPA mailing.. Ken BOOK INDEX. you've done Fantast (M) out of a sale. This is the sort of solid work that I delight to get through OMPA: it makes it all so worth while, in spite of the depressing one-shots.

BLUNT. Hmmm. Just shows how out of date this is, when Sandy goes to the pictures twice a week TWO WEEKS RUNNING. And as for that remark about a couple of months planning leaving no need for stop gap zines, I can assure everyone that Sandy will not be putting out any more zines... I cut him up in little pieces and put him in my new mixer, then flushed the resulting mush down the zink. I shan't use my mixer again till it's been sterilised.

Re the mistake about the Lion... the only one was about the name which was a slip. It was only moved from in front of a pub when they built the South Bank stuff... the rest is pukka gen. Middle East Confidential by the standards of the law definitely, but I must admit that even by my own standards, I was a little embarrassed at parts of it.

BURP I do most definitely agree with you about the time available for OMPA. As a housewife as well as a working woman I find very little time available for OMPA - most of it has to be done in dribs and drabs. Take for example these reviews. When I get the bundle, I hurriedly skim through the lot and put them aside. When I have a little time to spare (ha!) I take each one and read thoroughly, marking a small stroke against any points on which I wish to comment. Then rough out comments on a sheet of paper from an old teleprint pad. Next, when all the lot are read, I dummy up TLF in type. The stencil has then got to be cut, then run off. I reckon the whole thing takes a very long time. For other zines such as TSI the whole thing has to be roughed out first & so on. That is why, in my opinion, it takes such a long time to put out one decent OMPazine in a year. It is very nice for these people who live with their parents or have a wife to look after them, or for that matter a landlady, but they must make allowances for those who have to do the looking-after themselves.

5/- pieces are SO minted. I believe the last ones were Coronation year. And they can be bought, specially packed in plastic cases through the banks for, I think but am not certain, 5/6d (five and six to the Yanks.) I might add, too, that every now and again golden sovereigns are still minted, just to keep the workers' hands in. It seems it's a difficult operation but in my ignorance I thought all they did was melt a bit of gold, pour into a mould, and let it cool. Voila-- sovereigns. These aren't circulated - I assume they remelt 'em and send the gold to Fort Knox.

Re photos, tripods are not allowed in a lot of places, the Monument being one. But an iron railing running around the top at about 4 feet from your feet-level is a good resting place for a camera so no need to worry there. Most cathedrals and famous churches permit photography within on tripods but frown on flash. In most cases you have to find the verger, pay a bob (1/-) and get a slip of paper entitling you to take photos on that day. If not, it is still a nice gesture to ask the verger's permission - they are usual rather proud of their churches and like to think someone thinks it worth a photo or two.

I wasn't really bitching about languages, but it is hellish hard on the AE as Archee has since found out. And foosh to you, I enjoyed Magnificent Roughnecks. Maybe it was corn, but corn can be such a change at times. Loved your comments on Gallery.

INSCREWTRIBOBLE. Re adulation and the offering of page credits, I don't think if you had needed then Ken that you would have been left out of things.

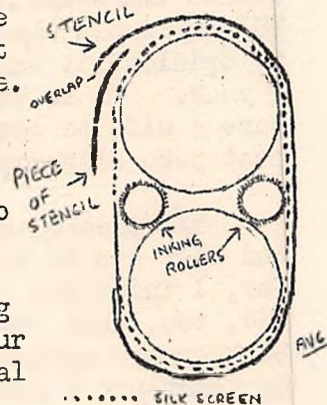
I still say that the whole point of this APA is that it is not necessary to WRITE the thing yourself. The whole point is the publication of the magazine. If you insist on a percentage to be written by the editor, it might be wise first to get Ken & Vin's opinions. After all they're the pair who first devised it. If you are going to insist on your schemes, I

can think of some people who would be slung out right away - no names you can work them out from their publications.

Now, let's have it...who has done their 'bare minimum' of activity requirements and then rested on their laurels. A large number have done one big zine of more than 16 pages (hardly a bare minimum) and then put in small review zines each or every 2nd mailing. The ones that I moan about are those who consider a couple of pages each mailing sufficient. Another thing, how may mailings have been 200 pages or less? I believe there's only been one - provided you exclude post mailings from the count.

Television - wasn't it used by Gernsback first in Ralph 124C41+? If I can, I'll help with the Book Index if you let me know what you want done.

GALLERY I thoroughly enjoyed the cartoons. Our senses of humour must be similar. Re that piece of stencil, sounds like you have the same type of duper that we have and we use it like that and the stencil piece still stays on the machine. You just lift up the bottom of the main stencil and tuck the piece of stencil under that, and smooth the top piece back again. The ink on the stencil holds the piece down under it, and the ink on the silk holds the whole thing to it. No slipping, no mess.



Many thanks for the invitation too ... we are writing to you, Chuck, we do hope you're back again now after your enforced absence. We're getting hold of some ad. material for you, Gestetner's have just opened up a new place in Euston Road near my works... all very modern and airy. We see from some demonstration models they have, that our duper is now 50 years old.

Do your comments mean you won't be able to get across for this year's Con? What a shame... we've been looking forward to meeting you and Juanita so much. And how about Juanita's article on food? I haven't yet had time to read the last two items in your zine but I'll save up the comments on them for writing.

STYL Horrible size paper, Ellis, don't do it again. Liked the justification but don't think it will save any time ... the reverse in fact. It'll be fun to see you again at the Con this year and we're determined that we're not going to be so busy organising this time that we shan't have time to say more than hello...goodbye. The hotel looks like the answer to a good many prayers... you know what the George was like and this seems like another Geo. only larger. Generally liked this but so far there's not a lot to get my teeth into to criticise. Let's see more.

Bob Pavlat is definitely a Good Man.

Damn good poem by your Mother. Encourage her...suggest she writes one on an SF-mad son, or, Where is my Wandering Boy Tonight?... or some such,

PHENOTYPE Hey I protest... my cover varied from the rest. The ink blots were different. Mr. Editor, sir....

Hi Rich. Loved your Christmas card... do you make all your own rubber stamps or something?

1/14.. so that's the explanation. I was beginning to think there was a conspiracy afoot to do me out of my fair 6/- worth of zines just because my husband gets them. I'll be writing to you about it.

I like your way of fitting in the fanzines about which you've no particular comments. Have you been listening to the Goons? And that Gorgon/Zola pun cheesed me off. Shaver issue...uhuh Eccccchhhh! I like that idea of herding neos to do the work very much. Might try it some time too.

H.M.S.O.... Her Majesty's Stationery Office, who print up most of the Government publications (Ruff's I believe do all the rest). Not to be confused with O.H.M.S., which you put on envelopes going On Her Majesty's Service and which then don't have to have postage paid. Now, in return, tell me, what is the official meaning of G.O.P?

SKERRY Welcome Lars... why in hell do you dislike mongese... or is it mongooses? Anyway, why? And do you have fireworks in the States on November 5th?... I don't suppose you do. Liked Kent's piece. Nothing here really for me to criticise... good fun, plenty of promise and I'm looking forward to more.

LEER Lovely stuff... no criticisms at all. Regarding Scraping the Barrle, does this mean that magazines and fanzines can't be sent by us through the mail to S.Africa or the recipients will get jugged?

NOISE LEVEL.....Uhuh.

STEAM Ken, have you been taking cliché lessons from Ted? You know which one. Funny, but it just isn't big enough.

FUNTUST (MUDWAY) LUMUTED. A brilliant effort Ken. How did you manage to think up enough titles to fill up all those pages?

SCHNERDLITES I was anything but wholly bored. Loved your Rock Island HOLE BORING SUP. Line takeoff and the Pogo piece.

POOKA Hi. With regard to a potential troublemaker, while I'm puzzled as to what officially should be done, it can be counted as covered by Rule 9 in the Constitution, coming under the "etc." Ken and Vinc worked this Constitution out very carefully and it seems to cover almost any contingency.

96 Appleboxes my Ghod! And the rest. Come to think of it, we shall have trouble when we move. I think we shall have to send out parcels to each Stateside fan begging them to look after their one until we can get there and let them unload. Then no one person would be cluttered up, we'd get the things over there, and only fans who want to build a house would be fighting to get hold of the parcels... they'd make good walls.

I don't think the Loncon 57 will be too big for you... we're all looking forward immensely to meeting you if only you can get across. Like your definition of an agnostic... I'm definitely one myself. From your comments I assume Robert Merrill is the one who kicks up all the stink at the

business sessions, in spite of being called William by the Falascas.

The only serious thing about Elvis Presley's successor is that it looks like coming true. Limericks fun, conreports interesting.

Still a little confused about this incorporation and besides, we understood that the deficit had been made up via the charges for advertising etc. London is working the other way, paying as they go along instead of at the end... seems so much safer and then, if you can't pay, you don't have something. And if you've got money coming in at the end, so much the better.

I do feel people are being just a little hard on Dave Kyle. Anyone would think he'd intentionally put the con in debt. It seems a little ridiculous for the Falascas to suggest that no work was done on the Con until June when I personally know that at Easter Dave had done a tremendous amount of work. We saw some of what had been done and he hadn't been slacking.

Another point, it doesn't necessarily follow that hard work on a Con every day for a year will make it a success... Cleveland were just lucky. It might be the deadliest flop out and if you don't believe me, ask Manchester, England.

SATAN'S CHILD It was interesting stuff on the Antarctic Expedition Dorothy, but I've read it all before in many newspapers and magazines and I'm sure all the rest of OMPA have done too. It seems a waste of pages.

What male are you specifically referring to in Piece de Resistance, or needn't I ask?. Loved the search for Fanny Hill.

Reprints from Eye III seem to me again a waste of space. 90% of OMPA possess their own copies and have already read those pieces. This issue definitely not as good as your last.

ARCHIVE Hooray for Helen! I too agree that yak about music and musical appreciation bores me... let's hear the music, not the guff. Surely budgie imports are restricted by the customs because of psittacosis (and if you can't spell, try Parrot Disease).

I think you're jumping to conclusions regarding the ostracism of fen not holding the popular view. Bobbie, for instance, believes that the Suez expedition was right but very few of the rest of us do. We don't ostracise or look down on her for her beliefs. But we don't purposely bring the matter up for argument, unless we feel in a battling mood.

Again, take capital punishment. Did you notice how, when the Bill seemed a possibility, those agin it were the most vociferous? Up until that time, those against Capital punishment were the loudest in their cries. Now once again that it seems we shall retain capital punishment, those against it are making the most noise. It seems that the losing side always is the noise-making one. Once their ends are gained, they quieten down.

As for me, I'm agin it.

That's all for now folks, be seeing you later.